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ABSTRACT

In the year 2000, approximately 1.75 million Australians (13.2% of the country's population) undertook some form of vocational education and training (VET). Of all VET students, 75.5% undertook training with Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and other government providers versus 13.0% with community providers and 11.5% with other registered providers. Approximately 15% of Australia's VET students were apprentices enrolled in VET courses for off-the-job training. Most (91.3%) students studied part time. The most popular courses were from the business, administration, and economics field of study, attracting 20% of all VET students. The majority of students (65.4%) also undertook courses leading to a qualification recognized under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), with nearly two-thirds of them undertaking a course leading to an AQF certificate III or higher. Nearly 90% of VET subject enrollments that were assessed resulted in a successful outcome. The percentages of TAFE graduates by employment status before and after training as of 2001 were as follows: working (full or part time), 66.6% before and 73.4% after; unemployed (looking for work), 13.5% before and 11.9% after; and not in the labor force, 14.1% before and 14.2% after. The data indicate that VET training may help

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students advance in their careers or move to new occupations. (Contains 9 figures and 3 tables.) (MN)

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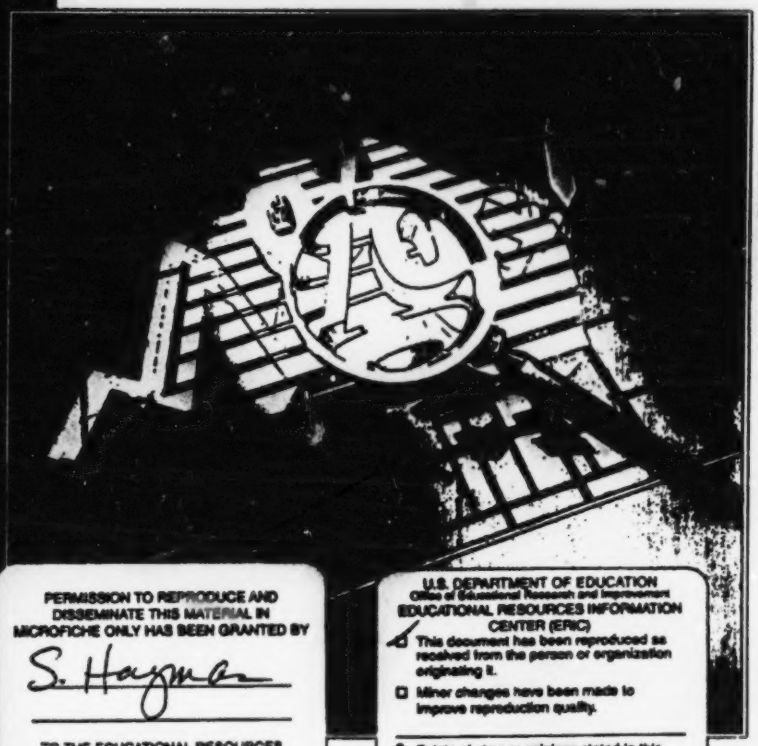
Statistics 2000

Vocational Education and Training: Programs and Outcomes

An Overview



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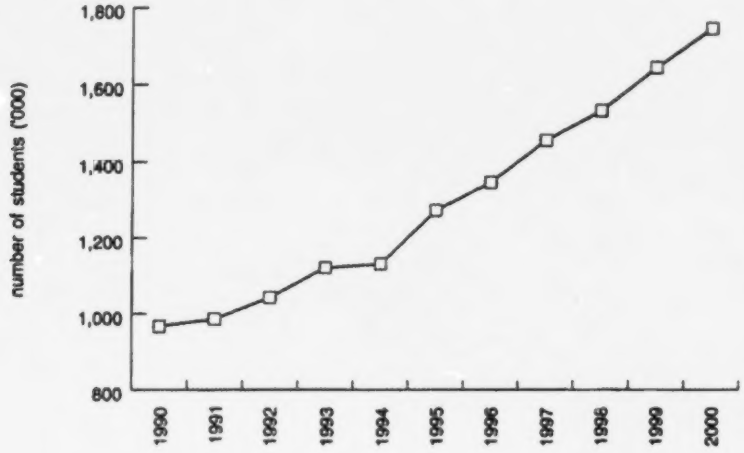
Introduction

In 2000, as in previous years, the key objective of Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector was to provide professional skills and knowledge that are highly relevant to the needs of today's workforce and industry. This report describes the nature of Australian public VET and highlights main changes in the sector that occurred in the last few years in response to the emerging demands of Australian industry and workforce for customisation of training and high quality training provision.

In an attempt to meet these demands, VET has developed into an industry-led training sector with a consistently growing student population. In the last decade, the number of students grew by 81% to reach 1.75 million in 2000 (figure 1), which represented 13.2% of all Australia's working-age population.

Figure 1: Number of students in VET ('000), 1990 to 2000



Training providers

A wide range of Australian training institutions and enterprises offer programs to people who wish to gain vocational skills. However, this publication contains information only on those training providers that receive public funding. They include:

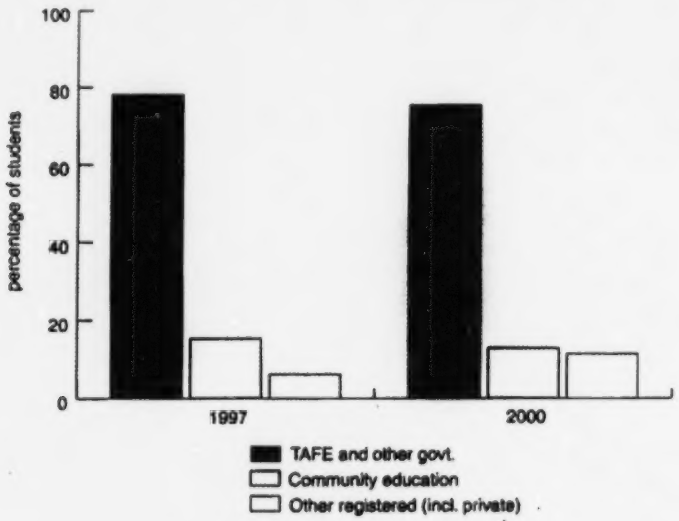
- around 90 TAFE institutes that deliver training at more than 1300 campuses
- community providers which deliver training at over 1100 centres and
- over 3300 other registered organisations, including private providers.

In the past, TAFE was the exclusive provider of vocational education and training in Australia, and in 2000 it still retained the largest share of the sector, accounting for more than three quarters (75.5%) of all students in publicly-funded VET. Though between 1997 and 2000 TAFE's student share fell slightly, the actual number of students studying at TAFE increased by almost 16% and the number of annual hours delivered by TAFE increased by 7%.

Over the same period, the number of students enrolled with community providers remained stable, at around 230 000, while their proportion of the overall VET student population decreased slightly, from 15.4% in 1997 to 13.0% in 2000.

Other registered providers, including private providers, have emerged as increasingly important providers of VET. The share of students enrolled with other registered providers increased from 6.3% in 1997 to 11.5% in 2000 (figure 2), and the actual number of students more than doubled.

Figure 2: Percentage of VET students by provider type, 1997 and 2000



Vocational pathways

Non-traditional training delivery

Australian VET offers vocational training to people who want to enter the workforce for the first time, re-enter the workforce, retrain for a new job or upgrade skills for an existing job. To ensure equitable access to training for all groups of people, VET has introduced alternative pathways alongside traditional classroom delivery. Over the last few years, with the rapid developments in information and communication technologies, non-classroom learning modes have become increasingly popular and important in the delivery of VET. For example, in recent years, the number of enrolments in programs provided through workplace-based delivery increased more than five-fold and in 2000 represented around 5% of all enrolments, a notable increase from just 1% in 1997.

School-based training

Another vocational pathway which is becoming increasingly popular among VET students is the training available as part of general secondary education or through special VET programs run in schools. In Australia today there is no system of specialist vocational secondary schools in place. However, a growing number of secondary school students undertake VET alongside their general school studies. In 2000, these students made up around 8% of all VET students[1].

[1] This figure is based on students whose school status has been reported to the data collection.

New apprenticeships

Training undertaken through an apprenticeship[2] program is yet another pathway available to Australians who want to gain vocational skills and qualifications. To undertake an apprenticeship, a student enters into a contract of training with a particular employer. In Australia, the apprenticeship system plays an important role in the VET sector, as well as in the employment system. In 2000, some 15% of all vocational students chose this pathway which provided them with an opportunity to combine on-the-job experience with a formal instruction at a training organisation (in most cases at a TAFE institute). On-the-job apprenticeship training focuses on practical vocational skills, while its off-the-job component provides theory-based instruction[3].

Training programs

Courses

The Australian VET system provides a variety of training programs across a wide range of fields of study. Designed to maximise students' job opportunities, these programs offer a number of training options, from individual subjects to comprehensive courses that lead to formal qualifications.

Between 1997 and 2000, the majority of VET students (around 60%) were concentrated in the following four fields of study:

- *Business, administration, economics*, which in 2000 attracted 20.8% of all VET students and comprised courses designed to develop students' skills in carrying out administration, secretarial, and general clerical duties; analysing, designing, and operating data processing systems; writing and testing programs and operating computerised information systems (table 1).

- *Services, hospitality, transportation* (16.6% of students) which comprised courses designed to provide skills that will enable students to work in hospitality and tourism sales and services or in food and beverage sales and services, including catering services.

- *Engineering and surveying* (11.5% of students) which offered courses designed to develop skills in designing, installing, maintaining or operating systems, facilities and plant equipment within a wide range of engineering/technology areas, including food processing technology.

- *VET multi-field education* (11.3% of students) which comprised general education courses in literacy, numeracy, and English.

[2] In this report, the term 'apprenticeship' is used in reference to both apprenticeships and traineeships. This is consistent with the introduction in 1998 of the 'new apprenticeship' system, which incorporated apprenticeships and traineeships into a single national system.

[3] Apprentices can undertake off-the-job training at various stages: before, during or after their on-the-job training. Also, in some cases, it is possible for an apprentice to undertake both components of training (ie, formal instruction and practical experience) in the workplace only.

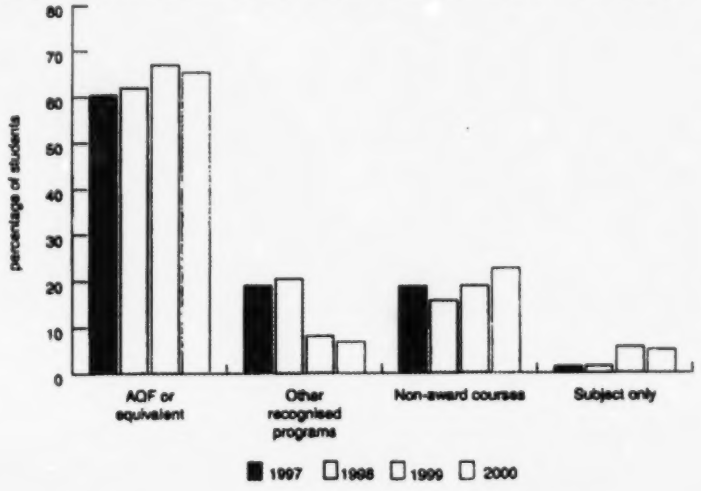
Table 1: Percentage of VET students by field of study of the major course[4], 1997-2000

Field of study	1997	1998	1999	2000
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	6.0	6.1	5.1	5.2
Architecture, building	5.3	5.1	5.1	4.8
Art, humanities and social sciences	7.6	7.1	7.1	6.7
Business, administration, economics	20.3	20.2	21.0	20.8
Education	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.5
Engineering, surveying	14.8	14.0	13.5	11.5
Health, community services	8.4	8.6	8.7	7.9
Law, legal studies	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Science	7.2	6.8	5.8	6.9
Veterinary science, animal care	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Services, hospitality, transportation	10.7	11.7	13.1	16.6
VET multi-field education	15.1	15.8	11.9	11.3
Subject only – no course	1.5	1.5	5.7	5.0
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	1 456.6	[illegible]	[illegible]	1 749.4

Qualifications pursued by VET students

Courses undertaken by VET students can lead to a wide range of qualifications. Since 1997, the qualification profile of VET students has changed. Qualifications recognised within the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) or equivalent qualifications still attract the majority of VET students. Between 1997 and 2000, the proportion of students enrolled in AQF qualifications grew from 60.5% to 65.4%. This growth represented an increase of almost 30% in actual numbers. At the same time, student numbers in other recognised programs decreased by more than 50% over the same period, and the proportion of students enrolled in these programs decreased from 19.1% to 6.9%. Consistent with the growing popularity of informal training, the proportion of students enrolled in non-award courses increased from 18.9% in 1997 to 22.7% in 2000 (figure 3).

Figure 3: Percentage of VET students by major qualification[5], 1997-2000[6].



[4] In table 1 the data relate to the students' *major* course, ie the course that leads to the highest qualification (if the student is enrolled in more than one course). In those cases where two different courses undertaken by the same student lead to the same qualification, the course which accounts for the highest number of annual hours is considered the student's *major* course.

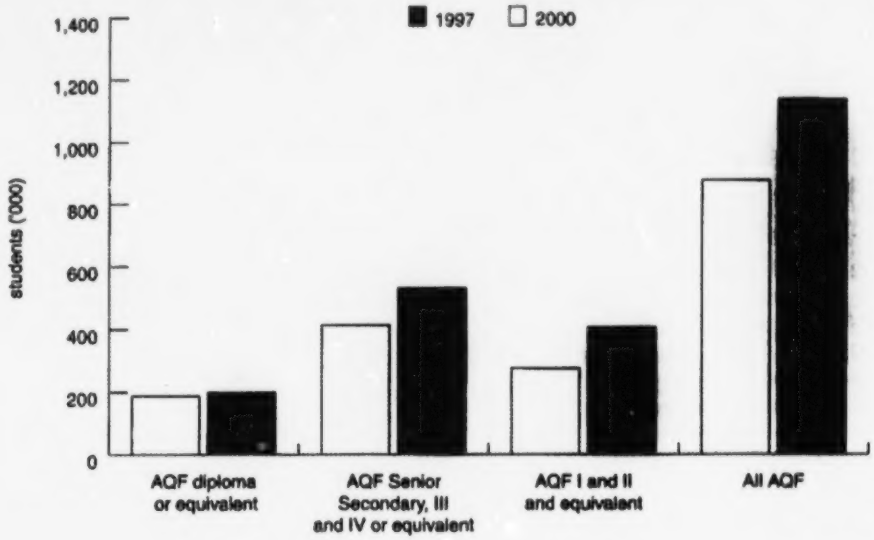
[5] In figures 3 and 4, the data are provided for the students' *major* (ie highest) qualification (if the student is enrolled in more than one course).

[6] The historic data presented in figures 3 and 4 should be interpreted with caution due to the reclassification of qualifications introduced in the AVETMIS Standard between 1997 and 2000.

Between 1997 and 2000, student numbers increased across all AQF or equivalent qualifications (figure 4).

- The number of students enrolled in AQF I and II qualifications increased by over 47% and in 2000 represented some 36% of all the students enrolled in AQF qualifications.
- The number of students pursuing AQF Senior Secondary certificate, certificates III or IV[7] also increased, by almost 29%. In 2000, these students made up almost half (some 47%) of all the students enrolled in AQF qualifications.

Figure 4: VET students by AQF qualification, 1997-2000



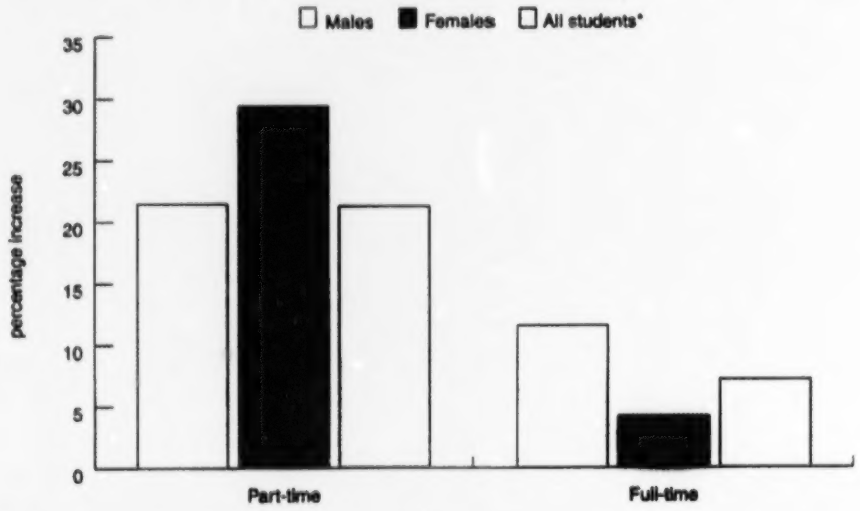
Full-time and part-time training

The majority (over 90%) of VET students study part-time. This option has become very popular over the last few years as more and more students combine study with work. Between 1997 and 2000, the number of part-time students increased by 21.3%, compared to 7.2% for full-time students (figure 5).

The increase in the number of part-time students over this period was greater for females than for males (29.4% compared to 21.5%). Most of the women studying part-time were enrolled in courses designed to equip them with general vocational and pre-vocational foundation skills or with skills in business administration (eg, general office and clerical studies, secretarial studies, data processing, etc) and hospitality (eg, food/beverage services, hotel and tourism sales and services, including catering, etc).

[7] Programs leading to AQF Senior Secondary certificate are considered approximately equivalent to courses leading to AQF certificate III.

Figure 5: Percentage increase for part-time and full-time VET students by sex, 1997 to 2000



* Includes students with sex 'unknown'.

Part-time students undertake slightly different training than full-time students. For example, part-time students are in general more likely than full-time students to enrol in courses from:

- *Business, administration and management* field of study which in 2000 attracted 20.0% of all part-time and 16.8% of all full-time students and
- *Food/beverage, hospitality, and tourism* field of study (11.4% of part-time and 7.1% of full-time students).

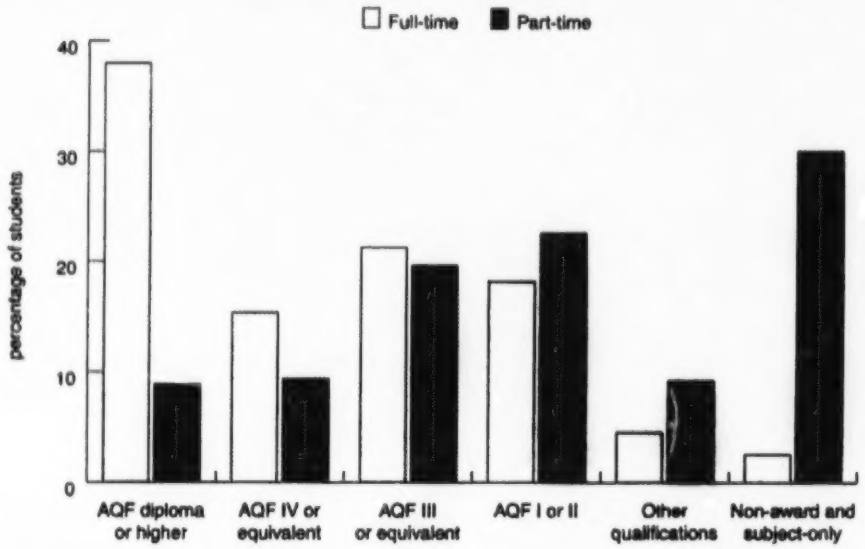
Full-time students are more likely than part-time students to enrol in courses from:

- *VET multi-field basic education* field of study which in 2000 attracted 17.1% of full-time and 10.0% of part-time students,
- *Computer science, information system* field of study (8.6% of full-time and 6.6% of part-time students), and
- *Community, family and personal health care* field of study (6.2% of full-time and 3.6% of part-time students).

Part-time students are as likely as full-time students (around 11%) to undertake studies in the *Engineering and related technologies* field. However, the 2000 data indicate that full-time engineering students predominantly undertake courses in computer systems design, electronics, and electrical and computer technology, while most of the part-time engineering students are more likely to choose courses in manufacturing and food processing technology.

The qualification profiles of full-time and part-time students are also slightly different. In general, full-time students are more likely than part-time students to enrol in courses that lead to higher qualifications. In 2000, three quarters (74.7%) of full-time students pursued an AQF certificate III or above qualification, compared to only 38.0% for part-time students (figure 6). Almost half of part-time students were enrolled in AQF certificate I or II courses (22.6%) or in courses that did not lead to any qualification (24.7%).

Figure 6: Percentage of full-time and part-time VET students by qualification, 2000



The tendency to choose part-time over full-time study was also evident in the decreasing number of hours students undertook per year. In 1997, each student on average spent 207 hours on training, while in 2000 it was 198 hours (table 2).

Table 2: Average annual hours[8] per student, 1997 to 2000

	1997	1998	1999	2000
Males	210	207	206	203
Females	204	200	196	192
All students	207	204	201	198

Delivery of industry-specific competencies

Throughout the past few years, the focus of the VET sector has been on the delivery of training that meets the identified needs of specific industries or industry sectors. In 1997, in response to the industry's demand for nationally consistent training outcomes and flexible delivery, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) introduced National Training Packages. Each Training Package comprises a set of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills and describes competencies relevant to a specific industry.

In 2000, training activity associated with National Training Packages involved 408 300 students (or 23.3% of all VET students) who attained around 2.9 million units of competency and spent around 101.4 million hours on training (or 29.3% of all annual hours delivered in VET). Of these students, more than half were females (52.3%). Almost three quarters (73.7%) of the students who were enrolled in Training Packages undertook an AQF II or III qualification (table 3).

[8] *Annual hours* are used as a measure of total training delivery. They are based on nominal hours for each subject (module or unit of competency) when the subject is undertaken in standard, supervised delivery mode, although some students undertake subjects in self-paced learning, flexible-delivery, on-line or remote-access modes.

Table 3: Summary of the training activity associated with National Training Packages, 2000

	Percentage of student	Percentage of total hours
Sex		
Male	47.7	45.2
Female	52.3	54.8
Total	100.0	100.0
Course qualification level		
AQF diploma or higher	6.6	11.8
AQF certificate IV	15.6	14.4
AQF certificate III	35.6	38.6
AQF certificate II	38.1	32.6
AQF certificate I	4.1	2.6
Total	100.0	100.0
Total ('000)	408.3	101 400

Training activity associated with Training Packages is concentrated in a relatively small number of skill areas. In 2000, around 60% of the Training Package units of competency were attained in the following four Training Packages[9]:

- *Hospitality industry* Training Package (25.8% of the Training Package units of competency), which comprises competencies associated with such jobs as cooks, bakers, food and beverage service workers, kitchen hands, guards and security officers and front-desk receptionists, hotel accommodation managers or service supervisors, etc.
- *Administration* Training Package (16.6%), which relates to competencies required for such jobs as secretaries, clerical workers, office managers or law clerks, etc.
- *Community services* Training Package (9.5%), which is associated with competencies essential for such jobs as aged/disabled persons' or children's care workers, child or youth residential care assistants, welfare professionals, youth workers, or family care workers.
- *Information technology* (8.5%) Training Package, which comprises competencies that relate to the jobs of keyboard operators, computing support technicians, systems managers or software designers.

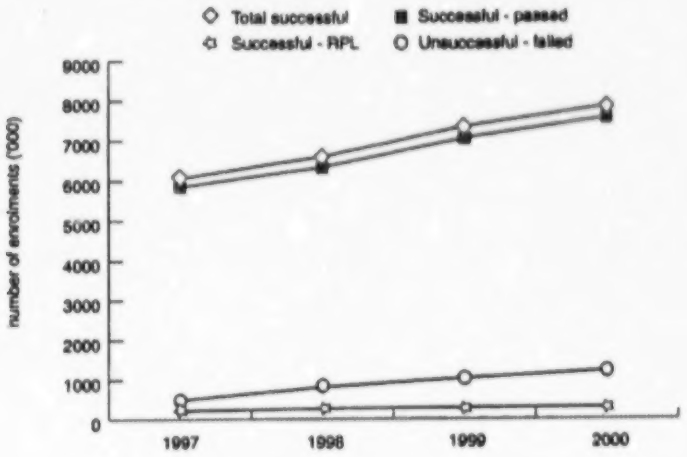
Training outcomes

One of the positive results achieved by the VET sector over the last few years is the high number of subject enrolments resulting in a successful outcome. In 2000, most of the subject enrolments (86.5%) that were assessed led to either a 'pass' or a 'recognition of prior learning' (RPL). Between 1997 and 2000, the number of assessed subject enrolments that resulted in a successful outcome increased by almost 30% (figure 7). However, the proportion successful outcomes represented of all assessed subject enrolments remained constant[10].

[9] In the list, units of competency are counted under their parent training package. However, because of the flexibility available, in some cases students may be undertaking a unit of competency while being enrolled in a training package other than the parent training package.

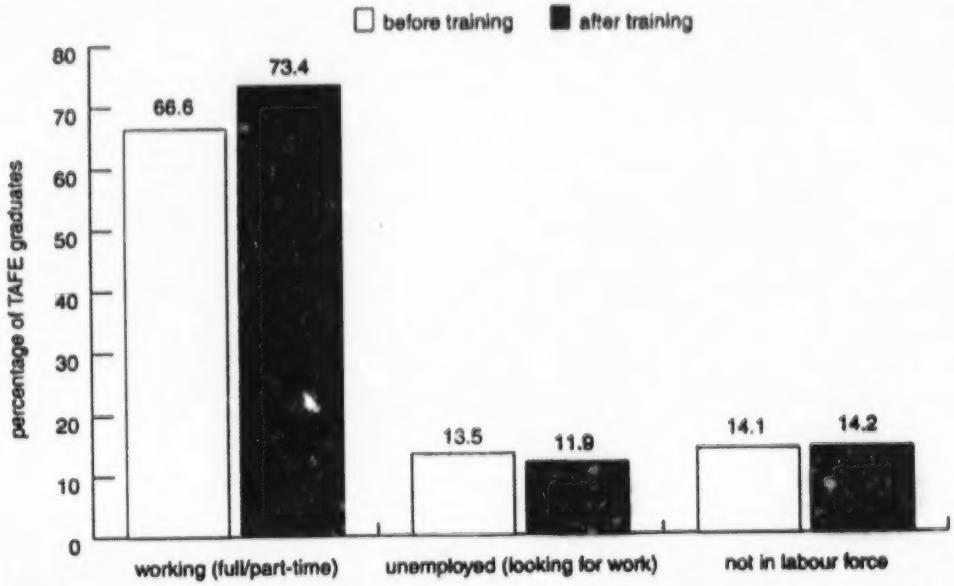
[10] Even though the data appear to indicate a slight drop in the proportion of successfully completed subjects, there are indications that this drop can mainly be attributed to the changes in the reporting practices that occurred over the last few years.

Figure 7: Assessed subject enrolments by outcome ('000), 1997 – 2000



The employment outcomes of VET students indicate that VET training generally improves students' employment status and opportunities. The 2001 Student Outcome Survey[11] shows that after training the proportion of employed graduates increased by 6.8% and the proportion of unemployed graduates fell by 1.6% (figure 8).

Figure 8: Percentage of TAFE graduates by employment status before and after training, 2001*

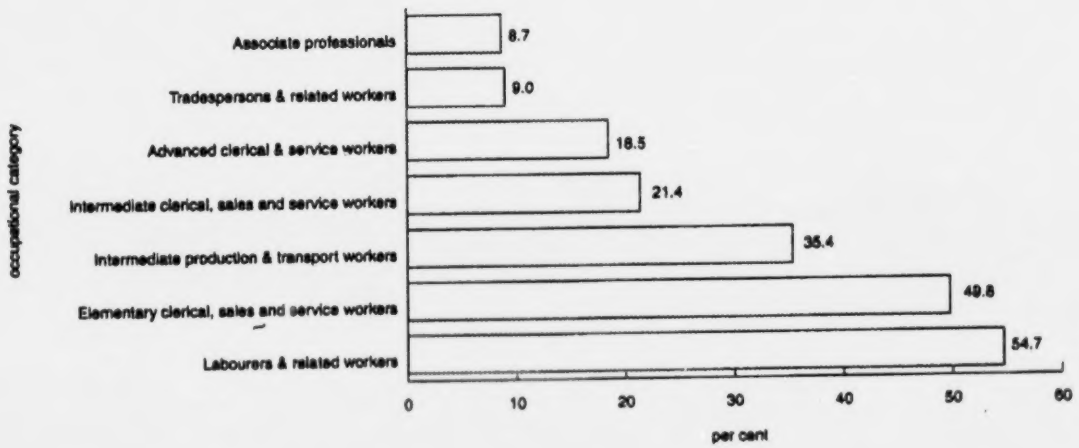


*Note: The percentages do not add up to 100% because the graph does not display the 'not stated' category.

[11] "Student Outcomes Survey 2001: National Report", NCVER, 2001.

The Survey also suggests that VET training may help students advance in their career or move to other occupations, often those associated with higher skill levels than their previous jobs. In 2000, around a quarter (24.6%) of TAFE graduates moved to higher-skilled occupations after their training. This occupational shift was more apparent for students who were employed in occupations associated with lower-skill levels before commencing their training. More than half (54.7%) of the students who were employed as *labourers and related workers* before their training and around half (49.8%) of the students employed as *elementary clerical, sales and service workers* moved to higher-skill occupations on completion of their course (figure 9).

Figure 9: Percentage of employed TAFE graduates who moved to occupations associated with higher-skill levels, 2001



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NCVER Ltd.,
252 Kensington Road
Leabrook SA 5068
PO Box 115
Kensington Park SA 5068

Telephone: (08) 8333 8400
Facsimile: (08) 8331 9211
Web page: http://www.ncver.edu.au
E-mail: vet_req@ncver.edu.au